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AUTHOR Doyle, Daniel
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ABSTRACT

The concept of total planning as applied in this presentation refers to planning as a part of library organization. It is felt that greater care should be taken at top-level planning to ensure that some proportion of the income and credit available is allocated to various services to allow departmental planning to be carried out effectively. This cannot be reduced to simple programming. It is stressed that while planning should control, control should not be the purpose of planning. The purpose o planning must always be the provision of better service for people and that this be done in the most efficient manner possible. Whenever institutions are created there is always the danger of lavishing on the institutions the love and care which was intended for the people they serve. (Author/NH)

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PLANNING AND THE BUSINESS OF LIBRARIANSHIP.

Paper read by Daniel Doyle, F.L.A.I., to Joint Conference of the Library Association of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Branch of the Library Association, at Limerick. - May, 1970.

Darwin guessed at a Scientific Genises and slow evolution through mentally immeasurable time and in so doing he sent the modern mind into a spin which still accelerates. An urge is everywhere. Everything must go faster. There is no longer time for the slow faltering steps of evolution. Biologists force life up the genetic stairs two at a time, while food-giving plants have their enemies destroyed by chemicals, which being called selective killers, are by implication given minds of their own. Time and space and motion are churned up and the poor moon, once the strayed offspring of the Earth, has its parentage put in doubt.

The words planning and development were once common nouns printed correctly grammatically in lower case, but now they shout in bold black capitals, not alone from the daily press, but from the prudent headlines of intellectual journals and even from the profit-printed glossy reports of the big foundations. Neither time nor man may meander. No "rolling English drunkard may make a rolling English road". Growth, in the old natural sense, is no longer meaningful. Growth is now the result of Planning and Development, something we have made to happen.

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The title given to me for this paper "Planning and the business of Librarianship" I have taken in this context and I will try to put forward some ideas, some concepts which may be worthy of discussion. Like most of you, I have done some planning and have lived, especially in the post war years with planners and in an atmosphere of planning. This experience has not been confined to our professional lives as librarians, but has taken us over completely. It is almost sinful to awake to a day not already programmed.

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Perhaps the sequence of these sentences hint a certain nostalgia for good old days and imply some condemnation of this generation. Such is not intended. The ever increasing number of people and the still greater increase in their ambitions face us

with this situation, and the need for our efforts, in Development and Planning towards increased production, and better living, is accepted. It is even welcomed with excitement because of the challenge it presents. A very modern moral theologian has said "Each mans sin is the extent of his failure to realise his vision of his own potential".

DEFINITION OF AIMS. To understand its place in time, and to spell out its needs, is probably the most difficult task that any society can undertake. To realise fully the demensions of that dot upon the chart which separates the past from the future, needs much information. The dot represents the Now and the Now is caught up in emotional swings between extremes of freedom and control, between the interests of nations and those of the common good. The problems of society at any moment are those of priorities and the recognition of real needs amidst the shouting of the pressure groups, the whole continuously confused by stop-go prosperity.

Lack of money sends Projects back into the files to rest till they are no longer capable of arousing enthusiasm and when money becomes real again it is devoted to some newer and more novel idea and so the library which might have been becomes a swimming pool or visa versa. After many years of accidental growth in this environment a pattern may be discernable in retrospect, but progress has not been consistent or towards a predetermined goal.

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THE LIBRARIES ACTS. I have mentioned the difficulty in any age of declaring aims. For the most part the various Libraries Acts were an expression of the aspirations of the social leaders down the years. In later years much study has gone into the preparation of reports which in turn have inspired present legislation. These reports were prepared by librarians or from information supplied by librarians and this is the point where the librarian enters the field of planning both in regard to the planning of libraries themselves or in the much wider field which concerns all planning. The Dainton Report, page 3, says, "Libraries form a large and important part of the nations information services, the general aims of which are to collect and store whatever information is likely to be required, to provide access to it as speedily as is necessary and to arrange its supply in the most useful form where it may be most effectively employed".

This statement in the Dainton Report clarifies the librarians function. Immediately upon the formation of any planning Committee or Council and the statement of its purpose the librarian has a professional function in the production of all necessary demographic, social, educational, industrial and commercial and factual data which on intelligent examination of the questions demand, together with reports of parallel or near paralled efforts in other places. At present this happens informally in most cases, but not in all. Usually librarians are approached individually and often accidentally because of personal contacts, but very seldom is the librarian invited to the early meetings of planning bodies and given the requisite agendas or basic statements so that he may apply his bibliographic and other skills in the provision of a comprehensive supply of information. I suggest that this is something that could be done and which could save a lot of time if approached in a businesslike way.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND PROPOSALS.

The Library Association of Ireland, a few years ago accepted in a general concise statement on "Overall Planning for the Library Service in Ireland" the following points.

1. The Public Library Service is part of the educational, economic, technical and recreational life of the nation.

2. "... a comprehensive service will not emerge in the country if library development is to proceed along present lines"

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1. The Public Library Service is part of the educational, economic, technical and recreational life of the nation.

2. "... a comprehensive service will not emerge in the country if library development is to proceed along present lines".

3. "... provide a full scale service embracing adequate general library facilities as set out in the UNESCO Manifesto" ..."to provide a comprehensive schools library service, reference library facilities and a technical and commercial information service".

Because the contents of the UNESCO Manifesto are not familiar to all my listeners to-day I repeat part of the summary as follows:- "The public library is a product of modern democracy and a practical demonstration of democracy's faith in universal education as a life-long process.

Though primarily intended to serve the educational needs of adults, the public library should also supplement the work of the schools in developing the reading tastes of children and young people, helping them to become adults who can use books with appreciation and profit.

As a democratic institution, operated by the people for the people, the public library should be: established and maintained under clear authority of law; supported wholly or mainly from public funds; open for free use on equal terms to all members of the community, regardless of occupation, creed, class, or race.

WHAT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SHOULD OFFER.

The complete public library should provide: books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, maps, pictures, films, music scores and recordings, and give guidance in their use.

The public library should offer children, young people, men and women, opportunity and encouragement: to educate themselves continually; to keep abreast of progress in all fields of knowledge; to maintain freedom of expression and a constructively critical attitude towards all public issues; to be better social and political citizens of their country and of the world; to be more efficient in their day-to-day activities; to develop their creative capacities and powers of appreciation in arts and letters; to aid generally in the advancement of knowledge; to use their leisure time to promote personal happiness and social well-being.

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A VITAL COMMUNITY FORCE.

The public library should be active and positive in its policy and a dynamic part of community life.

It should not tell people what to think, but it should help them to decide what to think about. The spot-light should be thrown on significant issues by exhibitions, booklists, discussions, lectures, courses, films and individual reading guidance.

Reading interests should be stimulated and the library's services publicized through a well-planned continuous public relations programme.

The public library should link its activities with the work of other educational, cultural and social agencies - the schools, universities, museums, labour unions, study clubs, adult education groups, etc. It should also co-operate with other librarians in

the loan of publications and with library associations for the advancement of public librarianship.

The books in the library should be made accessible on open shelves and by use of efficient technical processes; and the library's service should be brought close to the homes and workplaces of the people by means of branches and mobile units.

THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY.

"With a well-trained, resourceful and imaginative staff, an adequate budget and public support, a public library can become what it should be - a university of the people offering a liberal education to all comers.

Citizens of a democracy have need of such opportunities for self-education at all times. The complexity and instability of life today make the need an urgent one."

I also give you the summary of the report of the Council of Europe on "Public Libraries and Life Long Integrated Education", which is called for short the Namur Colloquy.

"The Colloquy attempted to define the part which the public library should play in the field of permanent education. Permanent education must be made available to people of all age groups to assist them in performing their work efficiently and in preparing them to engage in activities of a creative and cultural nature in their leisure time.

To participate in this task, public libraries must have the required staff, materials and buildings. A new public libraries act might be needed in some countries to lay down standards, to provide proper financial assistance and to ensure a competent level of performance. Research on the use of books and libraries is needed in order to ascertain the nature of the tasks to be undertaken by public libraries in this field".

A WORKING PARTY.

The working party set up by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna considered all these documents and accepted the statements of general aims contained in them.

Starting from there, the Working Party (appointed by the Library Council's Sub-Committee on Library Development) considered the acceptance of the following particular aims as a prerequisite to library planning in this country:-

"STATEMENT OF PARTICULAR AIMS:

(I) That every citizen of the State be entitled as a matter of right to access to a comprehensive and fully developed public library service.

(II) That such public library service be a fully integrated one embracing the entire country and envisaging support service from the National, the University and the Specialist Libraries.

(III) That the Public Library, being the local community library, must play a paramount part in any fully integrated library service and that it should therefore provide

(a) an adult lending service to meet all the needs of the commumity served.

(b) a developed children's service including a schools library service.

(c) an adequate information service to supply commercial technical and industrial needs.

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(c) an adequate information service to supply commercial technical and industrial needs.

(d) a Reference Service (including developed local archives and a local history section).

(e) a service to the handicapped, the housebound and those in hospitals and prisons.

(f) the provision of non-book material - gramophone records, films, slides, tapes, etc.

(g) the provision of machinery whereby a person - irrespective of location - may obtain access to the entire body of library material within the country, i.e. an efficient inter-library loan system.

(h) sufficient staff of adequate calibre to ensure that the public library system will operate with maximum efficiency at all levels.

(i) a dynamic policy that will ensure:-

(a) that the evolving needs of each community will be anticipated and met as required.

(b) that suitable reviews of the service be carried out to ensure that the most up-to-date material will be provided in all departments.

I think that if we, both public representatives and librarians, in the light of what I have put before you, accept the goals stated by UNESCO, and the Council of Europe, and as interpreted by the members of the Working Party, for application in Ireland, we could then proceed to consider what planning may be necessary to bring these aims to reality.

On the assumption that this Conference will accept these aims I shall now proceed to examine in general terms the present condition. The present state of Library provision in this country is not good, but it is a very healthy sign when those who are daily concerned with the good functioning of the services, that is the Councils, Committees, and working librarians are the first to draw attention to the inadequacies and plead for improvements. The library Association in an agreed statement has already said,

> "(a) there is no national overall library policy.
> (b) there is no developed school library service.
> (c) there is a lack of co-ordination of resources of public and special libraries and there has been uneven development due to lack of standards".

STANDARDS. It became apparent in recent years that progress towards the realisation of general and particular aims would not be possible without a public statement, an authoritive public statement on standards. Without such a statement it is impossible to have an objective judgement of the present position or of the rate of progress. At last year's Conference in Cork, we had three papers on standards,

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The imposition of standards must always create difficulties. It interferes with democracy. I am not re-opening a discussion on this point. It has been resolved by the declaration of minimum standards, or in other words standards so low that service below the point of minimum would be meaningless. It is generally understood that democracy at local or regional level has plenty of room for variation above that point.

Any idea of standards is also chained to points in time, to points in the general educational development of a people. Certainly no statements of minimum standards can remain true for long.

A great advantage which might derive from a declaration of standards is that responsible authorities would have a target. I have already referred to the Association's accepted statement on the uneveness of development. This has not been due entirely to the variation in economic resources as between Authorities. If this were so the same Authorities would be equally backward in all their services. The variation in Library Services is probably due to a complete absence of guidance and I suggest that the only real guidance is a clear statement of both aims and of minimum standards. Most people are as yet unaware of the wide variation of service in public libraries in the country. Since the Associations statement on the variation in the levels of service much homework has been done. The Working Party's research, examinations and comparisons were based on tentative minimum standards which we can examine later.

It has been stated often that the basic features of a good library were Bookstock, Staff and Premises. To these three, in order to clarify the picture, we must add Finance, because a good service is not based only on Bookstock and Premises, considered in terms of initial investment, but on these two kept annually up-to-date and organised by a sufficiently qualified staff.

The headings chosen for an examination in depth of the services were (a) Total expenditure on the whole service per annum; (b) Bookstock and book expenditure per annum, and (c) Staff. There was not enough real evidence available to make comparisons of premises.

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The three headings having been chosen and the tentative targets set it was found that no authority had reached the minimum of annual expenditure, that the variation in urban areas was from 78% the highest to 29% the lowest. In country areas the variation was from 66% to 16%.

Under the heading of book expenditure per annum the percentage effectiveness varied in urban areas from 90% to 10% and in counties from 71% to 14% in the lowest.

In staffing the effectiveness ranged in urban areas from 100% to 37% in overall staffing. In counties the figures were 88% and 25%. The staffing figures were less satisfactory for statement in general terms, because of the varying percentages of qualified staff, staff in training and the totalling of part-time staff hours (mostly untrained) to achieve mathematical whole-time equivalents.

These calculations were made on figures now two years old and it is possible that some Authorities have advanced nearer to the minima, some may even have gone beyond the stated figure. Advances are, however, sometimes illusory especially if stated in money terms only. A ten per cent increase in prices can cancel a ten per cent budget increase.

It seems clear to me at any rate that such wide differences would not exist if Local Authorities were not left completely in the dark as to what kind of service was expected. It is all too easy to say that where a service ~~was~~ is grossly inadequate the situation should be quite evident. But this is not necessarily so. As a library service develops, the demands of library users develop with it. The history of even the least developed service will reveal the truth of this. Any increase in the education or the total knowledge in a community generates a demand for more. This is true and this was true for the past fifty years, but with the vast and fast increase in education to-day this truth is about to blow up in the faces of the unwatchful, whether the faces be those of librarians or councillors. That may be an overstatement. Time will tell.

Some are of opinion that the attainment of minimum standards should be made compulsory by law. To enact new laws takes time. Meanwhile the recommendations on standards by the Working Party as adopted by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna should be published and both An Chomhairle and this Association should endeavour to have minimum standards adopted by all Local Authorities by the time any new Act

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TENTATIVE MINIMUM STANDARDS. No doubt there are those among you who are waiting for some information as to the justification of the standards. The first requirement was that under each heading it could be demonstrated that such a standard was in fact already achieved or that its achievement was in sight. Without this limitation any statement of standards could be self defeating and any sound administrator could dismiss them as being unrealistic. In considering bookstock and bookstock replacement the figures of the English "Roberts Report 1961", the "Canadian Public Library Standards 1967" and the "Hawnt Report", Northern Ireland, were kept in mind, but used only as general indicators. The figures arrived at were based on combined experience in this country and on close assessment of the trends of the past few years.

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BOOKSTOCK STANDARDS. In relation to bookstock standards no figure of total bookstock in relation to population was found wholly acceptable and it was found necessary to include the annual book expenditure in each case. Figures for total bookstock become completely irrevelant if worn and obselete books are not withdrawn regularly. The tentative figure set down was an intake of 17 new books per 100 of the population per annum. At the time of the research the equivalent cash statement was forty pence per head of the population.

It must be stated and reiterated that any statement of standards in terms like these must be short term. Should improved service generate increased demand the figure of 17 new books per 100 population may soon prove inadequate and any statement of standard in terms of money is likely to be out of date before the print dries. It is, therefore, necessary to emphasise that to state a number of books per 100 people purchased per year is more accurate than a cash statement; that the figures in either case are short term and the term could be as short as five years in practice. It is also very necessary to emphasise that the standards applied here are MINIMAL. It is necessary to write this word in capitals, because it must not be confused with Maximum. Any worth while service is always away beyond the Minimum.

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PLANNING FOR USE OF RESOURCES. Assuming that the magic wand has now been waved and that most authorities have accepted the standards, in fact as well as in theory, it is necessary to plan to get the best use of resources. This is, I think, a different type of planning to that of business or industrial planning. The industrialist buys material, transmutes it and considers himself the more efficient the faster he gets rid if it. The Librarian buys books, considers himself efficient if he doesn't lose them, considers himself more efficient the more work he adds to them so that in good time they can yield up their contents in whole or in part so that the consumer, having partaken to his mind's content, leaves much the richer having at one and the same time taken all away and left all behind.

At this stage I want to make a comment on the meaning of planning or of planning as I understant it. Planning to be sensible must be total. Total planning takes a little longer. Greater pains must be taken. Without these efforts, however, there may be action, it may be possible to point to individual achievements,

but there is no guarantee that all the bits and pieces will cohere and add up to the fulfillment of a total vision. When planning is total and is directed at the attainment of a desired condition all activities are related. On the otherhand, piecemeal progress is often less fruitful than appearances would indicate. All the parts are necessary if an engine is to run effectively.

Total planning involves the application of the particular aims already referred to throughout the whole area under the jurisdiction of the Library Authority. It means planning geographically in relation to the distribution and this can call for as much care in cities as im counties. It may be even more difficult to discern natural centres in the outward spread of cities than it is amongst more scattered populations. The best points of distribution for adults and for children are not necessarily identical. It is always true that a total bookstock should be fragmented as little as possible for no collection of books is large enough to meet all needs and the smaller the library, the smaller the chances. Planning must ensure that special interest groups are facilitated.

ACTIVE - PASSIVE. At this point one must also decide whetner the particular library is to be an active or a passive agent in its community, that is whether it is to remain content with the accumulation of books and materials or whether it is intended to go further and take the initiative in developing a close relationship between all special interest groups and the library. From a business point of view

but there is no guarantee that all the bits and pieces will cohere and add up to the fulfillment of a total vision. When planning is total and is directed at the attainment of a desired condition all activities are related. On the otherhand, piecemeal progress is often less fruitful than appearances would indicate. All the parts are necessary if an engine is to run effectively.

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ACTIVE - PASSIVE. At this point one must also decide whether the particular library is to be an active or a passive agent in its community, that is whether it is to remain content with the accumulation of books and materials or whether it is intended to go further and take the initiative in developing a close relationship between all special interest groups and the library. From a business point of view there is a great deal in favour of the active approach in contrast to the more traditional passive one. The business mind must see premises and bookstock as a great capital investment and that the return on the investment is the use made of the services by the public. Business interests call this advertising or promotion, Librarians may call it Public Relations, but it makes good sense either way. This theory does not apply equally to all kinds of library. The National Libraries or advanced Reference Libraries will not need to indulge in promotions to the same extent as public libraries. Yet U.N.E.S.C.O. says "The public library should be active and positive in its policy and a dynamic part of community life". The word public as used in the Manifesto can be interpreted widely.

MECHANISATION OF PROCESSES. A great part of this Conference is devoted to the consideration of the uses of modern business machines and processes to increase the efficiency of library activities. These considerations are part of the material of this paper which, I thank God, are being treated by speakers more competent than me.

There is one small point I would like to mention and it concerns the librarians, not the elected representatives. Recently we have seen the introduction of Standard Book Numbers and these may have to wait for mechanisation before being fully effective. At the moment they could be used to reduce the staff time on book ordering, but only if they are used by all publishers, only if all reviewers are induced to use them and only if an index is made available giving a quick reference back from the numbers to the titles.

ASPECTS OF REGIONALISATION. The Library Association statement on overall planning already accepted, stated that a basic region should provide a population in the range of 100,000 to 250,000. The Working Party accepted these guide lines and applied them tentatively. It is clear, however, that this will be part of a major Local Government change and that the basic organisational needs of other services will have to be set down side by side with those of libraries and that, so long as the present valuation basis of local finance continues, regions must be co-terminous with rate-raising units. Should the present rating system be removed the organisational units for any service

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A sound business approach demands that if a population is to be fully served it must be of considerable size. Normal day to day needs can be met by small organisations, but small budgets cannot buy many expensive books or is it likely that small populations will have sufficient demand to justify expensive purchases. The net result is that a number of librarians, each with small budgets must decline to purchase some very worthwhile

books. Borrowing such books is only half an answer. You may have to wait till the bigger library which bought it has satisfied its own readers first.

The bibliographical resources of small libraries cannot be large enough to produce proper advise to applicants who can't come accurately versed as to the author, publisher, date and price. If information retrieval is to be based on expensive machines, the small unit cannot pay the bill. This Conference, through its theme, is gathering the information upon which future decisions must be made just as the conferences of earlier years motivated the clarification of our ideas on standards.

The problems for libraries in future regionalisation plans are many. Regionalisation is not the pure solution of all organisation problems. Most solutions are compromises and it may be that the future will demand regionalisation of some aspects of our work, but there must be a lot of clear thinking before agreeing on any compromise to ensure that much of the personal warmth which has given richness to librarianship as we have known it is not lost and that the highly skilled specialists at the centre will not be deprived of the ideas of the librarians at the perimiters. Education and specialisation are necessary, but we must be careful not to ignore the contributions of the Frank O'Connors, the Brendan Behans or the Christy Browns. Those who get the highest schooling generally produce the best results, but not always.

REGIONALISATION IN THE MID-WESTERN REGION.

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The Library Grants Scheme 1961, asked for planning. The Limerick Rural Survey was the first of its kind in this part of the country though later than Mogeys work in the North. The emergence of Limerick-Shannon-Ennis is an industrial unit followed by the Litchfield survey and report helped to advance this area to the forefront in the minds of regional planners. The Limerick County Library Development Plan 1962, which tried to be as comprehensive as possible, when approaching the question of higher Reference Library facilities, stated that the county could not afford provision at this level nor would the number of potential users in the county justify the expense. The Plan suggested that all the Library Authorities in the Mid-Western Region of Limerick County, Limerick City, Clare County and North Tipperary, should be able to afford such a service at its centre.

STAFF. Examinations carried out by the present staff-population ratio is one per 7,630 whereas the short term minimum standard suggested one per 3,000 and that one in every three should be qualified. These minima are below international standards, but were accepted by the Working Party because of the necessity of being realistic.

The Working Party when considering staff questions became acutely aware of the shortage of qualified staff. The recent decision to accept the Association's view that the education of librarians should be full time and University based, will, I hope, go far to meet the needs. In the growth of a people and their library service (and both growths should stay very close) the number of people who come to the library looking for something to read" gradually decreases, whereas there is daily increasing demand for specified books and information. The library staff to deal with the latter must contain a much higher percentage of qualified librarians.

NOT-MENTIONED. This paper has dealt in the main with the problems of public libraries in the republic, not because of any sense of insularity, but because I felt it necessary to discuss some problems in domestic detail. I was also influenced here by the Wittgenstein dictum quoted last year by Dr. Roberts which ran "on those matters on which one cannot speak, one should remain silent". Non-public library planning problems have received no consideration, but they were background to two of last years papers. The Roberts, Hawnt and Dainton

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I have already stated that the large part of this conference which deals with approaches to mechanisation and which involves libraries of all types, is integral to the efficient planning of efficient libraries and that our approach to planning must be influenced by the possibilities of such mechanisations and size of the units which they may serve.

Later proposals for a third level education in the area brought up the question that such an institution would require a library at the same high level and that a unification of both could produce a really good library. It is necessary to re-state here that library does not mean books only, but books, knowledge, expertise and sophisticated modern equipment. Such a unification could bring together the disciplines of the scholarship of the schools, and the co-ordinating control of librarians. In a sense the area had a unique advantage in having at this moment in time no advanced library at this level, unlike other large urban areas, where learned societies and their libraries had developed separately and now needed creaking and cumbersome co-operation schemes to get the best use of them.

I do not ask for any discussion of this local problem at this Conference, but merely bring the facts in here to illustrate an aspect of planning where it is clearly demonstrable that the problem cannot be solved within existing Government boundaries. It may be of interest to say that after some initial apathy, the Regional Development Organisation, a regional Council set up by the Local Authorities in this area, after consultation with all the Librarians involved, decided that the proposal to provide a Regional Reference Library was both reasonable and desirable.

I would like to say before leaving this point that I think library services in this area could be improved by complete amalgamation which, in fact, is Regionalisation upwards towards the creation of a larger unit which, in turn, should be combined with considered devolution to ensure that the more remote sectors could operate with maximum vitality and fullness while being able to benefit from larger book stocks and better bibliographical help, and at the same time give sufficient authority to librarians not working at headquarters to enable them to retain their professional self-respect. I think that in libraries and in all fields of activity, the confining of all authority to Headquarters Staff is likely to bring apathy and death at the very point where the service reaches the public.

IN CONCLUSION. In conclusion and having, I am sure, left many things unsaid, it is necessary to return to the starting point and the need for careful total planning. In referring to total planning earlier the concept was applied to planning as a part of library organisation. At an earlier point in this paper reference was made to the frustrations of planning library or any other service in the affluent to-day, bankrupt to-morrow, sequence in which we live. I feel that greater care should be taken at top-level planning to ensure that some proportion of the income and credit available is allocated to various services to allow departmental planning to be carried out effectively. I do not think, at the same time, that all this can be reduced to simple programming and I would in a final plea stress that planning should control, but that control should not be the purpose of planning. The purpose of planning must always be the provision of better service for people and that this be done in the most efficient manner possible. There will remain always the danger that in doing so, we must create institutions and that we may be misled into lavishing on the institutions the love and care which was intended for the people they serve.